

# Headquarters EMPLOYEE BULLETIN

#321

10 August 1972

## "The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia"

1. Mr. Alfred W. McCoy, a graduate student at Yale, has written a book entitled "The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia." Prior to its publication, Mr. McCoy has been involved in rather extensive publicity in the newspapers, on television, in an appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and an excerpt of the book was published in the July 1972 issue of Harper's. Many of these allege in effect that CIA is somehow implicated in the drug trade in Southeast Asia. His theme can be summarized in his words as "American diplomats and secret agents have been involved in the narcotics traffic at three levels: (1) coincidental complicity by allying with groups actively engaged in the drug traffic; (2) abetting the traffic by covering up for known heroin traffickers and condoning their involvement; (3) and active engagement in the transport of opium and heroin. It is ironic, to say the least, that America's heroin plague is of its own making."

2. CIA has altered its traditional practice of remaining silent with respect to allegations against it in view of the serious nature of the charge in this case. In several public statements, the Agency has taken issue with these allegations and extensions of them by editorial writers and journalists. CIA also approached the publishers of Mr. McCoy's book with the request that we be allowed to review the book before publication and advise the degree to which we felt it was erroneous, on the theory that a reputable publisher would want to know the facts before being associated with such serious charges. In our letter we pointed out clearly that the decision as to publication would remain with the publishers and that our sole purpose was to offer to point out factual inaccuracies. After reviewing the book, we advised the publishers that the large number of allegations, assertions, and interpretations contained in the book were limited to ones supporting Mr. McCoy's thesis and that he appears to have ignored available information which might contradict his thesis. We submitted a few specific comments illustrating our point. The publishers have reaffirmed their earlier confidence in Mr. McCoy's scholarship and plan to publish the book unchanged as soon as possible.

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3. CIA believes that our difference on this subject is no mere debate over the excellence of Mr. McCoy's scholarship. His charges against CIA, both directly and by innuendo, have been repeated by editorial writers throughout the nation and could create an accepted myth of CIA involvement in the drug traffic. We believe the effect of Mr. McCoy's book is to do a disservice to CIA's fight against the drug traffic and dishearten the many sincere people in CIA who are at least as concerned about the drug menace as Mr. McCoy.

4. CIA's position on this issue can be simply stated as follows:

a. The opium trade has existed in Southeast Asia for generations. This trade depended upon the market, and until recently the market for Southeast Asian opium was in Southeast Asia. The increase in the opium trade and the appearance of heroin were a result of the increased market, in part due to the presence of large American military forces in Vietnam.

b. CIA at no time allied with, abetted or engaged in the drug trade in Southeast Asia. From its earliest days in Southeast Asia, CIA took steps to ensure that it would not be involved in the drug trade.

c. When this drug trade became a matter of concern to Americans, as distinct from a local Southeast Asian problem, CIA engaged in a variety of programs to attack it. These efforts are by no means totally successful, but they have had substantial impact.

On 14 April 1971, Mr. Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, said to the American Society of Newspaper Editors:

There is the arrant nonsense, for example, that the Central Intelligence Agency is somehow involved in the world drug traffic. We are not. As fathers, we are as concerned about the lives of our children and grandchildren as are all of you. As an Agency, in fact, we are heavily engaged in tracing the foreign roots of the drug traffic for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. We hope we are helping with a solution; we know we are not contributing to the problem.

This statement remains valid.

DISTRIBUTION: ALL EMPLOYEES

9 AUG 1972

## Harper Proceeding On Drug-Trade Book Despite C.I.A. View

After receiving a brief critique from the Central Intelligence Agency, Harper & Row, Inc., has decided to proceed with the publication of a book by a 26-year-old Yale graduate student that charges that the agency is involved in heroin trafficking in south east Asia.

Harper & Row submitted galley proofs of the book, "The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia" by Alfred W. McCoy, to the C.I.A. after the agency's general counsel, Lawrence R. Houston, wrote the publishing house on July 5, asking "to see the text."

B. Brooks Thomas, vice president and general counsel of Harper & Row, said yesterday in an interview that the C.I.A.'s criticisms, delivered by hand on July 28, "were pretty general and we found ourselves rather underwhelmed by them."

In the book, Mr. McCloy states: "American diplomats and secret agents have been involved in the narcotics traffic at three levels: (1) coincidental complicity by allying with groups actively engaged in the drug traffic; (2) abetting the traffic by covering up for known heroin traffickers and condoning their involvement; (3) and active engagement in the transport of opium and heroin."

In a covering letter to the eight-page, 1,500-word critique, Mr. Houston stated that "it is plain that Mr. McCloy has limited his citations to those supporting his thesis, and he appears to have ignored available information which might contradict it."

"The truth is that the C.I.A. has never been involved in the drug traffic and is actively engaged in fighting against it," the letter added.

In a telephone interview from New Haven, Mr. McCloy said he was "struck" by the "incredible disparity" between the "confident, strident, militant tone" of initial C.I.A. criticisms of the book and "the final letter, which was very very weak—pathetic almost."

The book is scheduled for release on Aug. 17.

### C.I.A. Plans No Further Action Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 8—The C.I.A. plans no further attempts to block publication of the McCoy book, a spokesman for the agency said today.

Referring to the announced decision of Harper & Row to proceed with early publication of the book, the spokesman said:

"We sent them a letter and that's it. I haven't heard any talk here of seeking an injunction or taking any other legal steps to halt publication."